

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 00575 281832Z

47

ACTION ITF-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SR-02

ORM-01 AID-05 FDRE-00 SCA-01 VO-03 INSE-00 /084 W
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O R 281615Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6542

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 0575

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMG, BC

SUBJECT: RESETTLEMENT OF VIETNAMESE REGUGEES

REF: STATE 097854

1. IN THE ABSENCE OF MOST SENIOR GOVERNMENTAL LEADERS INCLUDING PRESIDENT KHAMA AND MINISTER, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, WHO AT KINSTON COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE, DCM MADE AN ORAL DEMARCHE TO ACTING SECRETARY, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, SAMUEL MPUCHANE. DCM EMPHASIZED THE TRAGIC PROPORTIONS OF THE PROBLEM AND THE MAJOR EFFORT BEING UNDERTAKEN BY THE UNITED STATES. HE NOTED THAT THE USG HAS ALREADY CONTACTED MAJOR INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES SUCH AS THE UNHCR (WHICH HAS A RESIDENT REP IN BOTSWANA). IN THIS CONTEXT, HE URGED GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA TO CONSIDER ACCEPTING REFUGEES FROM VIETNAM. HE EMPHASIZED THAT A DEVELOPING COUNTRY LIKE BOTSWANA NEED NOT NECESSARILY CONSIDER ACCEPTING POOR REFUGEES. HE NOTED THAT THERE ARE MANY WELL EDUCATED VIETNAMESE IN SUCH FIELDS AS ENGINEERING, MEDICINE, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS WHO COULD MAKE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF BOTSWANA IN RETURN FOR BEING PROVIDED A
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PAGE 02 GABORO 00575 281832Z

NEW HOME. HE ALSO NOTED THAT THERE ARE CAMBODIAN REFUGEES

REQUIRING HOMES.

2. SECRETARY MPUCHANE TOOK NOTE OF THE DEMARCHE AND EXPRESSED HIS DEEPEST SYMPATHY FOR THE TRAGEDY OCCURRING IN VIETNAME. HE STATED THE HOPE THAT AS THE SITUATION CLARIFIED THERE MIGHT BE ROOM FOR SOME ACCOMMODATION BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES, BUT SAID HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE DANGER TO THE LIVES OF MANY IN VIETNAM WAS REAL.

3. MPUCHANE SAID HE WOULD RELAY THE INFORMATION ABOUT REFUGEES RESETTLEMENT TO HIS SUPERIORS, BUT ADMITTED THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS A RAPID DECISION WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED BY MPUCHANE, IT WAS APPARENT FROM HIS MANNER THAT HE FELT IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT FOR BOTSWANA TO ACT IN WHAT COULD BE CONSIDERED A POLITICAL SITUATION CONNECTED WITH VIETNAM. FROM PRESS REPORTS WE GATHER THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE PUBLICLY OPPOSING THE REFUGEE EFFORT. PAST EXPERIENCE INDICATES THAT THE OAU COULD BE RESPONSIVE TO NORTH VIETNAMESE PRESSURES IN THIS MATTER. IN ORDER TO BUILD A COUNTER PRESSURE IN SUPPORT OF THE RESETTLEMENT OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, IT MIGHT BE WORTH CONSIDERING MAKING SOME FORM OF APPROACH TO THE COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE AT KINGSTON. A GENERAL STATEMENT THERE OF SUPPORT FOR RESETTLEMENT COULD BE THE SMALL ADDITIONAL WEIGHT NEEDED FOR SEVERAL COUNTRIES TO ACT IN THIS HUMANITARIAN MATTER.

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